

quickly out in the Western Pacific. It would cannibalize Pacific Deterrence Initiative funds intended to build infrastructure and enhance interoperability with our partners in the region just to cover shortfalls elsewhere in the budget. And it would cut procurement of critical munitions that are already in short supply.

The administration is playing a dangerous shell game, and the political consequences aren't lost on either side of the Pacific.

The perception that the United States might be any less than fully committed to prevailing in great power competition has left China emboldened and our friends in the region quite worried.

Here at home, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs sounded the alarm, warning that great power peace was "fraying at the edge."

Preserving that peace will require more than the action we will take today. It will require this administration to get serious about funding our national defense. It will require major investment in the sorts of cutting-edge capabilities that deter those who intend harm on America and our allies.

So in the coming weeks, we will see whether Democrats' talk about rebuilding alliances has any substance to it. In the annual Defense authorization and the appropriations process, the Senate will embrace this essential debate about restoring America's hard power head-on. This is a pivotal moment, not a time for half measures on America's national security.

JANUARY 6

Mr. President, now on another matter, today, the Homeland Security and Rules Committees released the conclusions of their monthslong investigation into the circumstances of the unprecedented breach of security here at the Capitol on January 6.

I am grateful to our colleagues on both committees whose hard work made this invaluable report possible.

My assessment of the terrible events of the 6th has been consistent from the beginning. I have condemned the perpetrators, as well as those who enabled and encouraged them, and I have given full-throated support to our colleagues' bipartisan inquiry, along with the work of Federal investigators and prosecutors, to ensure that every criminal participant faces justice.

The Rules and Homeland Security report identifies a number of serious shortcomings in Capitol security that were exposed and exploited on the 6th. It directs our attention to the most glaring gaps that could leave the complex vulnerable to future incidents.

Through the efforts of the Capitol Police, the Senate Sergeant At Arms, and other institutional partners, the Senate's work to close these gaps is already well underway. The committee's inquiry into January 6 is ongoing, and the nationwide search for a new Chief of the Capitol Police is making progress. Our colleagues' latest find-

ings should guide the entire institution's ongoing security reviews.

Today's report is one of the many reasons I am confident in the ability of existing investigations to uncover all actionable facts about the events of January 6. I will continue to support these efforts over any that seek to politicize the process, and I would urge my colleagues to do the same.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT *pro tempore*. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT *pro tempore*. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The majority whip is recognized.

#### JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, one of the major responsibilities of the Senate Judiciary Committee, which I chair, is the selection of judges to serve our Nation. It is important not only because it is a question of measuring their standards of integrity, honesty, and judgment but also because these are lifetime appointments. Literally, the women and men who are chosen for these slots will have an impact on the future of America in their courts which could last for many years and decades. That is why we are careful with the Biden administration to not only bring good nominees before the Committee but to make certain they bring the necessary qualities.

This week, the Senate will consider several of President Biden's judicial nominees. I believe they understand the role of a judge in our system. They will bring much needed experiential and demographic diversity to our Nation's courts.

I have tried throughout my career, and many others like me have tried, to choose men and women for the bench who will reflect the diversity of America. The face of justice is often as important as the fact of justice, and if people appearing before our courts feel that there is at least a chance for success based on the background and experience of a judge, I think it is a positive thing.

Given the background of these judges in trying cases, arguing appeals, and issuing rulings from the bench, I believe, and the committee agreed, that these judicial nominees are ready for service.

Today, I would like to speak in support of two of them: Julien Neals, nominated to the District Court of New Jersey, and Regina Rodriguez, nominated to the District Court of Colorado.

New Jersey is really in desperate need of Federal judges. They are facing a judicial emergency. In each of the States' six judicial vacancies, they have been designated as a judicial emergency status by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts.

Today, we can begin to address this judicial emergency by finally confirming Julien Neals to the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey. He is an extraordinary public servant. He has served the people of the State of New Jersey for decades. As an expert in municipal law, he handled several legal disputes that were tried to verdict, judgment, or final decision, including multiple—multiple—jury trials. He was the chief judge of the Newark Municipal Court. He presided over 6,000 cases in that capacity.

He received a unanimous rating of "well qualified" from the American Bar Association. He has the strong support of his home State Senators, Senators CORY BOOKER and BOB MENENDEZ. He has received broad bipartisan support in the Judiciary Committee, with five Republicans joining all the Democrats in supporting his nomination.

I urge my colleagues to support him.

This week, the Senate will also consider the nomination of Regina Rodriguez to be a judge in the District Court of Colorado. What a life story she brings. Ms. Rodriguez is the daughter of a Japanese-American mother, whose family was interned during World War II, and a Mexican-American father who was one of the first Hispanic coaches in the National Football League. Her father's job as a coach took the family across the country.

Although Ms. Rodriguez was born in Colorado, she spent several of her formative years in my home State of Illinois. When she was 17 years old, Ms. Rodriguez thought she might want to be a lawyer, so she put on her best suit, as she says, and knocked on doors in Macomb, IL, until she found a lawyer who said: "Come on in. I'll show you the ropes."

Lucky for us, Ms. Rodriguez held on to that passion that first developed when she was a teenager. Over the past 30 years, she has served as a talented litigator who has tried 35 cases to verdict.

She has a range of experience in government and the private sector. In the public sector, she served as an assistant U.S. attorney and rose to become the first Latina Chief of the Civil Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Colorado. In private practice, she represented a broad array of clients, from individuals to Fortune 500 firms. During her tenure as a litigator, Ms. Rodriguez has demonstrated that she understands the importance of applying the law to the facts in a fair manner. She has represented plaintiffs, defendants, government, and those who have sued the government. As a woman of color, she has risen as a partner in several leading law firms—no mean feat.

Ms. Rodriguez has taken out time from her demanding schedule to mentor young attorneys, just as that lawyer in Macomb, IL, did for her.

She has received a unanimous "well qualified" rating from the American Bar Association, as well as positive

blue slips from both Senators BENNET and HICKENLOOPER. Her nomination is also supported by the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, the Latinas First Foundation, and the Colorado Lawyers Committee.

She has earned support across the aisle. On May 20, Ms. Rodriguez was voted out of the committee by a vote of 17 to 5, with the support of six of my Republican colleagues.

When confirmed, she will be the first Asian-American judge to serve not only in the District of Colorado but in the entire Tenth Circuit. Her historic, well-deserved confirmation will bring our Federal judiciary closer to reflecting the lives and experiences of all Americans. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting for Ms. Rodriguez's nomination.

The judicial nominees we are voting on this week illustrate something that is substantial and profound. They illustrate that President Joe Biden is dedicated to appointing legal experts with outstanding credentials and a wealth of experience.

During his first several months in office, President Biden has nominated public servants who will bring to the bench a variety of professional perspectives and personal experiences. Too often, those things have been missing in previous nominees. By confirming judges who reflect the experience of all Americans and who demonstrate fealty to the rule of law, we can continue building a justice system that works for everyone.

Over the last 4 years, we have seen a concerted effort on the Republican side to fill vacancies. They broke records, in some respects, in the number of nominees that they brought before the Senate for approval. Some of the records are not ones to be proud of, from my perspective, and 10 of the nominees who were submitted for consideration during the last 4 years before the Senate Judiciary Committee were found unqualified by the American Bar Association. Nevertheless, most of them made it to the bench in lifetime appointments.

Many nominees came before us, of the Trump administration, who were seeking lifetime appointments to become a trial judge and had no personal experience in a courtroom. It is hard to imagine that anyone would be thrust into that situation and expected to perform as a professional. Imagine, if you will, the parties to those lawsuits, many of whom stake their lives and reputations on the outcome, to find a judge who couldn't find their way through the Code of Civil Procedure if they were forced to. That, unfortunately, was the standard that was used. As long as these nominees in the past had the blessing of the so-called Federalist Society, that was good enough for many of my Republican colleagues.

Joe Biden is really responding to that by suggesting nominees who meet much higher standards. I want to work with the Biden administration to con-

tinue in that tradition, so at the end of the day we can fill the vacancies with women and men who are not only competent and honest but have the integrity and experience, both legal and otherwise, to serve our Nation for the rest of their lives, should they choose, in these judicial capacities.

I commend these two nominees who passed out of our committee with a strong bipartisan votes. To my colleagues on the floor today, I hope they will join me in supporting them.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

JANUARY 6

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, let me begin by saying that I am grateful to Senators KLOBUCHAR, BLUNT, PETERS, and PORTMAN and the two Senate committees that they lead for their bipartisan investigation into the events of January 6, and for producing a detailed report in a short amount of time. The report makes clear that there is more work ahead for the committees. More importantly, it also highlights the immense bravery of the men and women of the U.S. Capitol Police who defended the Capitol Complex on January 6.

In the coming days, after a thorough review of the 100-page report, I will discuss its recommendations with my colleagues and work to institute reforms that will make a meaningful change to better protect the U.S. Capitol.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. President, on a different topic, in his 1996 State of the Union address, then-President Bill Clinton famously declared: "The era of big government is over."

Well, after taking a look at the Biden budget, it is clear that the era of Big Government is back, and it is bringing Big Government's usual companions: big taxation, big spending, big deficits, and, it seems likely, big inflation.

The Biden budget, which the administration quietly slipped out the door before the holiday weekend, would raise taxes by \$3.6 trillion over 10 years—3.6 trillion. All told, the Biden budget proposes at least 30 separate tax increases, ranging from a hike in the capital gains tax to a hike in the top income tax rate, to a new death tax. And it would raise taxes on middle-class families by allowing the tax relief the Republicans passed in 2017 to expire.

Under the Biden budget, in just a few short years, working Americans could be facing thousands of dollars in higher taxes. All these tax hikes, of course, are an attempt to pay for the Biden administration's new spending.

Under the Biden budget, government spending would exceed \$6 trillion every

year. To put that in perspective, the total—total—Federal budget in 2019 was \$4.4 trillion. An increase to \$6 trillion plus per year—\$8.2 trillion by 2031—is a massive, massive hike in Federal spending.

Over the course of the Biden budget, government spending would equal around 25 percent of our gross domestic product—far exceeding the average of the past five decades for spending, as a percentage of our total economic outlook.

So what would the consequences of all this spending look like? Well, I have already mentioned the \$3.6 trillion in new tax hikes. Another would be the deficits, which would exceed \$1.3 trillion every year for the next 10 years. By 2031, the end of the Biden budget window, our debt would be—get ready for this—\$39 trillion. Our debt would equal 117 percent of the U.S. economy—again, the highest level in our Nation's history, debt to GDP.

The interest payments on the debt would triple over the next 10 years to \$914 billion. That is right. By 2031, we would be paying nearly \$1 trillion a year just in interest on the debt. That is more money than our Nation will spend on Medicare this year.

So let's review. The Biden budget equals taxes, spending, and debt. And here is the real kicker: The Biden budget hikes taxes, hikes spending, and drives up the debt for pretty much nothing. That is right. After an initial good year or two, the Biden budget projects permanently weak economic growth. For a majority of the next 10 years, economic growth wouldn't even hit 2 percent.

All that government spending and debt isn't going to result in prosperity. It is going to result in permanent economic stagnation, and that means permanently diminished opportunities for American families, fewer jobs, lower wages, and weaker career prospects.

Democrats like to talk as if government can provide security and salvation. But the truth is, government is not an engine of prosperity. Government might serve as a safety net in difficult circumstances, but government will never make you prosperous. It is a robust economy, not a robust government, that would produce prosperity, that would produce the good jobs and good salaries and good benefits and good careers.

That is why one of the most important jobs of government is creating the conditions that will allow the economy to flourish. That is what Republicans worked to do with the tax relief that we passed in 2017. And, as we saw before the pandemic hit, it was working.

The Biden budget, on the other hand, focuses on creating a flourishing government, and the economy would pay the price. And working Americans would face a future of diminished earnings and reduced opportunity.

There is a lot more that could be said about the Biden budget. I haven't even mentioned the diminished investment